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ABSTRACT

These two essays present philosophical ideas on the development of shared governance in academic institutions. What philosophy has to contribute to governance is the very level of generality on which it "thinks." Philosophy places value on general principles and long-term goals, rather than particular cases and practical solutions. Philosophy also reflects critically on specific issues and then argues for policies. When philosophy deals with particular cases, it regards itself as establishing patterns and precedents to be used again in the future. Always balancing the particular and the general, it becomes possible to apply principles consistently as the theory expands. College governance has a special range of issues, due to the fact that it has faculty who are not just employees, but academic officers. The structural problem in academic institutions is that the administration, who have much of the governing power, are in important ways only secondary to the faculty. Proposed in these essays is the idea that shared governance would establish a zone of cooperation between faculty and administration. It would recognize both the central importance of the faculty and the range of administrative expertise and specialization that is necessary for the faculty to deliver their services to the community. (AS)

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Two Essays on Shared Governance

Robert E. Doud

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About the Philosophy of Shared Governance

by Robert E. Doud

I do not think anyone, however brilliant, can develop single-handedly an adequate theory of government. John Locke and Thomas Jefferson come to mind as persons I might trust to do this, but, even there, I would prefer a socially developed theory of social and governmental existence. I should also say that I find value in having the theory of government examined in an ongoing way all the time. Also, I prefer to deal with shared governance as a philosophical idea, somewhat abstractly, before thinking of how it is applied in a school or even locally at Pasadena City College.

What philosophy has to contribute to governance is the very level of generality on which it thinks. Philosophy places value on general principles and vision for the long-term, rather than particular cases and practical solutions. Secondly, philosophy reflects critically on specific issues and then argues for policies. When philosophy deals with particular cases, it regards itself as establishing patterns and precedents which it will need to apply again in the future. Always balancing the particular and the general, it becomes possible to apply principles consistently as the theory expands.

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The widest possible purpose of government is expressed when we say that government is *for the common good.* Government presumes that those serving in government, and the governed at large, can put their private interest aside when necessary, and cooperate for the common good. If there is no general will among people to act for the common good, then no government is possible.

College governance has a special range of issues, due to the fact that it has a faculty who are not just employees, but academic officers. The academy is the wider community of professors in the various disciplines, who have the responsibility of maintaining the quality and integrity of academic work. From the point of view of the academy, it is the teaching and researching faculty who are the heart of the institution.

The structural problem in academic institutions is that the administration, who have much of the governing power, are in important ways only ancillary to the faculty. Everything in a school that is not faculty is there to support the work of the faculty. It is not arrogance, but their mission as academicians, that impels faculty to maintain their special role in governance. Faculties must work to bring leadership to the surface through the senate and its committees. Shared governance is shared leadership.

Shared governance establishes a zone of cooperation between faculty and administration. It recognizes both the central importance of the faculty and the range of administrative expertise and specialization that is necessary for the faculty

to deliver their services to the community. Focus is on the common goal and the common good; faculty and administration exist to serve students within the educational framework of the wider community. The manner of operation is crucial; it is to be cordial and collegial, not adversarial and contentious.

Both faculty and administration have needs that must be met in order to serve students. There will always be conflicts insofar as faculty and administration are each authoritative in one way and ancillary in another, depending upon whether your point of view is that of management or academic matters. Mutual agreements between these collegial groups need to be worked out and constantly revised.

Shared governance should eliminate eventually some of the conflict by having it worked out by mutual agreements and in the experience of working together. When faculty and administrators meet on committees, shared governance starts to happen. As this interaction develops, mutual understanding and respect increases. The answer to present tensions between faculty and administration lies not in less, but in more contact between them, where real power to affect change is felt on both sides.

Shared governance does mean the sharing of power. It is impossible to empower others without delegating, entrusting, or otherwise sharing power. The diffusion of power down through the structure and especially to the faculty may not at first look or feel like the strengthening of our institution. But ways must be

found to make this happen. Faculties are not real faculties until the powers of their senates and committees are real.

The successful administrator in the California community colleges today is one who can empower faculty, give vision and leadership, and continue to persuade others toward what is best as goals and as means to ends. They continue to be authorities who direct in an attitude of service the life of the college and, in some ways, the work of the faculty. Administrators must be leaders who can share leadership with the faculty. Administrative officers fail, no matter how great their personal expertise, if they cannot filter and convey this knowledge through the entire institution, especially to the faculty.

Some Thoughts on the Philosophy of Shared Governance

by Bob Doud

My first thought is about the notion of the common good. I assume that all parties to the conversation about shared governance at PCC are interested in the good of the college as a whole. This assumption helps me address my colleagues, even when I sorely disagree with them, with civility and respect. This assumption also makes me regard habitual attempts to intimidate others by public denunciation or threats of litigation as beyond the pale of civility.

I consider here some of the tensions, balances, and polarities we are experiencing at PCC. I respect the struggle ~ see in my colleagues to resolve problems resulting from them in a civil and professional manner. Incivility is unprofessional. Also unprofessional. although perversely entertaining. I believe, is the arrogance of anyone who points out that others lack personal or intellectual integrity. Anyone who sets himself up as the arbiter of who has integrity and who does not ought to be acknowledged for his or her demonstrated arrogance.

The way in which we ought occasionally ~o think is one Or polarity and balance. For instance, there is a balance or polarity in governance between authority and collegiality Authority is exercised in a way that is collegial; that is, it generally seeks input from faculty and staff. On the other hand, faculty colleagues assume a certain authority of their own

when they act as leaders or argue cogently for some point. Authority and collegiality are principles held in balance in the academy, although the balance often shifts.

Another polarity in governance, it seems to me, is between persons and policies. All administration is a form of politics, in the better sense of the word. Politics is an art carried on by persons who acquire skill by practice. No policy is perfect and no person is perfect, and neither aspect of administration is dispensable. No policy should be so tight that it cannot be adjusted with discretion to meet changing circumstances. Also, all policies are subject to criticism and revision.

Another polarity in college governance i~ one between democracy and the prerogatives of the faculty. I take democracy to mean the rule of the people, including all the people whose lives are affected by whatever ruling is going on. I take the prerogatives of the faculty to be the academic and professional matters which are traditionally regarded as faculty
Due to its expertise, the faculty has a unique kind of authority. The faculty's expertise is in knowledge and teaching, and not primarily in management. Faculty members, at least some of them, will have skills in management. Faculty are not hired originally for their skills in management. The success of the college, however, depends in great degree on the management skills of at least some of the faculty. Most administrators come from the ranks of the faculty, or hold academic credentials of some kind.

In a college, the administration has the main prerogatives regarding the management of others, including faculty. Members of the administration also hold academic degrees, which make them members of the academy, even though their present role is not to serve as faculty members. Administrators do not automatically resign from the academy when they

accept positions as administrators. Almost all administrators are academics who have the further competence of being managers of academic environments.

The Board of Trustees has an authority that goes with its public accountability. Because of this public trust, the ultimate authority in the college belongs to the Board of Trustees. The various authorities and autonomies of the Board of Trustees, the administration, the faculty, the staff in their various roles, and the students as those served by all, are to be blended in an atmosphere of collegial respect. The prerogatives of the faculty are tempered by democratic structures which bind us all in shared governance. All constituencies are obliged to work together for the common good. Civility is an obligation incumbent upon all.

A polarity each faculty member experiences is the one between being an academic and being an employee. As an employee, each faculty member has contractual obligations which are supervised by the administration. Yet each faculty member also has rights, duties, and responsibilities for the integrity of their discipline and the teaching process, which go beyond local contractual obligations.

A polarity also exists between philosophical language, which speaks in generalities, but has the advantage of enunciating principles, and legal language, which speaks in specifics, but has the disadvantage of losing sight of the polarities structuring every decision and every application of policy. Polar thinking appreciates ambiguity. It fosters tolerance and appreciation for ambiguity as a sign of breadth and maturity, rationality and civility.